1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

length was pronounced by his brother, in which he impressed on their minds, the great importance which the deceased man had been to their nation; rehearsed his war exploits, and concluded by urging all to follow his example, and to become of equal usefulness to their tribe. Then they would be sure of following and becoming companions of him, and all the other great warriors, which had died before, in the world of spirits. After this address was closed, provisions were brought out, consisting of boiled dog's flesh, of which the company just tasted, and then a bowl full of it was presented to the dead man. He was then taken up by four men and carried outside of the village, just into the edge of the woods, and placed on a stage which had been previously erected, about ten feet high. The bowl of food was brought and set by his head, and his arms and accoutrements laid by his side. In this manner their dead are deposited, and are never buried. The wife and relations of the deceased made the most violent and dreadful howlings, tearing their hair and appearing to be in the deepest anguish, under the loss they had sustained."

Complexion, Etc. "The Mandans and the Gros Ventres are of the lightest complexion, and largest Indians on the Missouri. Their hair inclines to a chestnut color, and in some instances has a slight curl; it is never so lank and course as most other Indians. Their eyes are full and lively, their cheek bones rather high, and their countenances open and agreeable. The Gros Ventres have more of a fierce, savage look, than the Mandans who are courteous and sociable in their behavior. They are neat in their dress, which is similar to that of the Rus, except that they decorate it with white rabbit, and white ermine skins. Many of their lodges, or huts, are decorated in a beatiful manner; having the inside lined with the richest furs, such as the lynx, beaver, otter, white rabbit, martin, fox, mountain cat and white ermine, sewed together like patch-work, which gives them a rich and beautiful appearance. The lodge of the head chief was sixty feet in diameter, elegantly lined with furs, and the seats, which are also used as beds, were covered with the grizzly bear and buffalo skins. These people keep their lodges and buildings in a state of great neatness. They cultivate the same kind of produce with the Rus, and carry on a trade with the roving Indians, who occasionally visit them. The Mandans and Gros Ventres live in great friendship, although

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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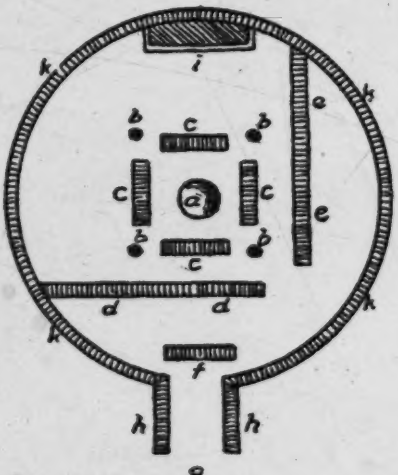
342 The doorway was five feet broad and six feet high, with a covered way of the same height, but seven feet broad and about ten feet long. The door itself was a raw buffalo hide dried on a frame which was hung from above on a cord, at night this was barricaded, and when the family was away the porch was closed with branches and sticks. This porch was covered with earth like the house itself and led downward to the lower level of the floor. It is not shown in any of Catlin's drawings and he does not mention one except in the medicine lodge, there he says it was eight to ten feet long, was hidden with a double screen, and guarded by armed sentinels.

342 Verendrye speaks of the division of the house into compart-
353 ments and we find that the same thing existed when Henry was there. Lewis and Clarke, and Gass also mention that one part of the interior was cut off and used as a stable for the horses. Catlin, however, mentions no such cutting up of the interior, nor do his pictures show anything of the sort, but Maximilian, who visited them in the winter, gives a diagram of the winter house showing several compartments; this diagram and its key is reproduced in Figure 2. The main interior arrangements of the house in spite of the discrepancy on these latter points are agreed on by all. In the center under the smoke hole was the fireplace, a round hole five feet in diameter and a foot or more deep. This was curbed with stones placed upright about the edge.[1] Around the walls was a series of beds and about the fire



353 FIG. 2. MANDAN HOUSE.
(After Maximilian.)

a, Fireplace; *b b b b*, Central posts supporting roof; *c c c c*, Seats; *d d*, Screen or wind break; *e e*, Partition behind which horses were kept; *f*, Door of skin; *g*, Entrance; *h h*, Covered porch; *i*, Bed; *k k k k*, House walls.

[1] Maximilian, p. 387.

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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over which a pot hung, were low seats of flexible willow boughs.

Henry's description[1] of the interior is probably the best, and is substantially as follows: on entering you first saw a kind of triangular apartment on the left fronting the fire, and leaving an open space on the right; this was to hold firewood. The partition was of squared planks twelve feet high, well calked to keep off the cold from the door. Between this and the fire was a space where the master sat on a mat of small willows supported as a sort of sofa and covered with a buffalo robe. On this the man sat all day and received his friends. To the left of the host began a range of beds. The master occupied the first bed with his favorite wife, then a wife occupied each of the next few beds, then came the young people. These beds were all built alike[2] and adjoined each other lengthwise. At the bottom of the hut facing the master stood his medicine stage containing everything he valued, and most important among them was a pair of bulls' heads daubed with earth. Here also hung his arms, ammunition, scalps and the like. Next to the stage was the mortar, fixed in the ground, and a pestle. The rest of the hut from there to the door was separated off for the horses at night.

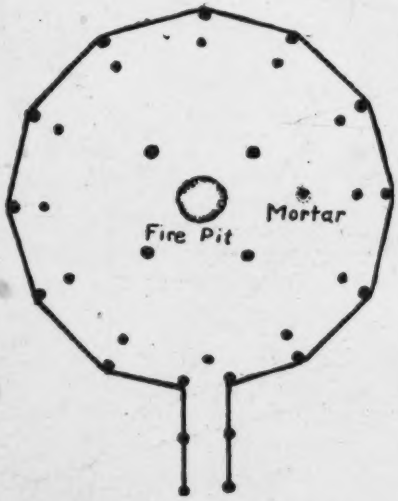

FIG. 3. MANDAN HOUSE.
(After Morgan.)

To this description might be added a few details from Catlin. He says that the cabins usually held a family and all its connections, from twenty to forty people. The beds were raised about two feet from the floor, were usually ten or twelve in number, four or five feet apart, and went all the way around.

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, pp. 329-40.

[2] See for description, p. 113.

3: Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

353 Between every pair was a large post. An elevation showing some of the details is reproduced from Morgan in Figure 1, and a ground plan, in Figure 3.

251 171 The sedentary character of the Mandans and the fact that they practiced agriculture led to the development among them of several cultural features not found among the purely hunting tribes. In common with most sedentary tribes they made use of caches or storage pits. Henry[1] gives a description of them saying that, in the fall after harvest, the corn was dried, shelled and put in deep pits. These were about eight feet deep, with a mouth just wide enough for a person to get in, but the inside was hollowed out larger and the sides and bottom were lined with straw. The cache contained twenty to thirty bushels of beans or corn where it kept for several years. The caches were scattered everywhere about the village. Catlin mentions caches, saying that they placed corn in pits six or seven feet deep, jug shaped, and tightly closed at the top.

291 DRESS:—The dress of the Mandans in general was much like that of their neighbors, at the later period of their history at least. There were however some minor differences. Verendrye says that at his visit the men went naked, except for a carelessly worn buffalo robe—not even wearing a breech cloth. The women wore very little as a rule, their only article of attire being an apron about the waist, a hand's breadth wide and a foot long. But he adds later that some of them wore a gown of very soft deerskin. It is probable that other articles of dress were borrowed from their neighbors as time went on.

515 302 The men and women both began the day with a bath, after which the body was carefully oiled with castoreum. For any ceremonial or feast the body was also painted in colors, these being mixed with grease. After the bath the face and hair were nearly always whitened. The men in Maximilian's time usually wore a breech cloth, of black and white cloth, and moccasins with little or no ornamentation. The upper part of the body was usually naked as they seldom wore the leather shirt used in many other tribes. Even in the winter, Maximilian says they wore only the buffalo robe over the upper half of the

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 360.

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

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[facing p. 80]

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

361 342 the lodge. These floors or foundations are all perfectly circular, and varying in size in proportion to the number of inmates, or of the quality or standing of the families which are to occupy them. The superstructure is then produced, by arranging, inside of this circular excavation, firmly fixed in the ground and resting against the bank, a barrier or wall of timbers, some eight or nine inches in diameter, of equal height (about six feet) placed on end, and resting against each other, supported by a formidable embankment of earth raised against them outside; then, resting upon the tops of these timbers or piles, are others of equal size and equal in numbers, of twenty or twenty-five feet in length, resting firmly against each other, and sending their upper or smaller ends towards the centre and top of the lodge; rising at an angle of forty-five degrees to the apex or sky-light, which is about three or four feet in diameter, answering as a chimney and a sky-light at the same time. The roof of the lodge being thus formed, is supported by beams passing around the inner part of the lodge about the middle of these poles or timbers, and themselves upheld by four or five large posts passing down to the floor of the lodge. On the top of, and over the poles forming the roof, is placed a complete mat of willow-boughs, of half a foot or more in thickness, which protects the timbers from the dampness of the earth, with which the lodge is covered from bottom to top, to the depth of two or three feet; and then with a hard or tough clay, which is impervious to water, and which with long use becomes quite hard, and a lounging place for the whole family in pleasant weather—for sage— for wooing lovers—for dogs and all; an airing place—a look-out—a place for gossip and mirth—a seat for the solitary gaze and meditations of the stern warrior, who sits and contemplates the peaceful mirth and happiness that is breathed beneath him, fruits of his hard-fought battles, on fields of desperate combat with bristling Red Men.

342 353 [354] The floors of these dwellings are of earth, but so hardened by use, and swept so clean, and tracked by bare and moccassined feet, that they have almost a polish, and would scarcely soil the whitest linen. In the centre, and immediately under the sky-light (PLATE 46) is the fire-place—a hole of four or five feet in diameter, of a circular form, sunk a foot or more below the surface, and curbed around with stone. Over the fire-place, and suspended from the apex of diverging props or poles, is generally seen the pot or kettle, filled with buffalo meat; and around it are the family, reclining in all the most picturesque attitudes and groups, resting on their buffalo-robes and beautiful mats of rushes. These cabins are so spacious, that they hold from twenty to forty persons—a family and all their connexions. They all sleep on bedsteads similar in form to ours, but generally not quite so high; made of round poles rudely lashed together with thongs. A buffalo skin, fresh stripped from the animal, is stretched across the bottom poles, and about two feet from the floor; which, when it dries, becomes much contracted, and forms a perfect sacking-bottom. The fur side of this skin is placed uppermost, on which they lie with great comfort, with a buffalo-robe

[352] 352

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

folded up for a pillow, and others drawn over them instead of blankets. These beds, as far as I have seen them (and I have visited almost every lodge in the village), are uniformly screened with a covering of buffalo or elk skins, oftentimes beautifully dressed and placed over the upright poles or frame, like a suit of curtains; leaving a hole in front, sufficiently spacious for the occupant to pass in and out, to and from his or her bed. Some of these coverings or curtains are exceedingly beautiful, being cut tastefully into fringe, and handsomely ornamented with porcupine's quills and picture writings or hieroglyphics.

From the great number of inmates in these lodges, they are necessarily very spacious, and the number of beds considerable. It is no uncommon thing to see these lodges fifty feet in diameter inside (which is an immense room), with a row of these curtained beds extending quite around their sides, being some ten or twelve of them, placed four or five feet apart, and the space between them occupied by a large post, fixed quite firm in the ground, and six or seven feet high, with large wooden pegs or bolts in it, on which are hung and grouped, with a wild and startling taste, the arms and armour of the respective proprietor; consisting of his whitened shield, embossed and emblazoned with the figure of his protecting *medicine* (or mystery), his bow and quiver, his war-club or battle-axe, his dart or javelin—his tobacco pouch and pipe—his medicine-bag—and his eagle—ermine or raven head-dress; and over all, and on the top of the post (as if placed by some conjuror or Indian magician, to guard and protect the spell of wildness that reigns in this strange place), stands forth and in full relief the head and horns of a buffalo, which is, by a village regulation, owned and possessed by every man in the nation, and hung at the head of his bed, which he uses as a mask when called upon by the chiefs, to join in the buffalo-dance, of which I shall say more in a future epistle

This arrangement of beds, of arms, &c., combining the most vivid display and arrangement of colours, of furs, of trinkets—of barbed and glistening points and steel—of mysteries and hocus pocus, together with the sombre and smoked colour of the roof and sides of the lodge; and the wild, and rude and red—the graceful (though uncivil) conversational, garrulous, story-telling and happy, though ignorant and untutored groups, that are smoking their pipes—wooing their sweethearts, and embracing their little ones about their peaceful and endeared fire-sides; together with their pots and kettles, spoons, and other culinary articles of their own manufacture, around them; present altogether, one of the most picturesque scenes to the eye of a stranger, that can be possibly seen; and far more wild and vivid than could ever be imagined.

Reader, I said these people were garrulous, story-telling and happy; this is true, and literally so; and it belongs to me to establish the fact, and correct the error which seems to have gone forth to the world on this subject.

As I have before observed, there is no subject that I know of within the

10: Neill H-1(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

342 angles, leaving open only a square space of about four feet on each side. This serves for chimney and windows, as they have [354] no other opening to admit of light; and when it rains, even this is covered over with a canoe to prevent the rain from impairing their earthen pots. The whole of the roof is then well thatched with willows, to the thickness of six inches or more. Over the whole is laid about one foot of earth, and round the base to the height of three or four feet, and the thickness of three feet, which answers for security in case of an attack by the enemy, and keeps out the cold. The door is five feet broad and six high, provided with a covered way or porch on the outside, of the same height as the door, about seven feet broad and ten feet in length.

342 352 The doors are made of raw buffalo hide stretched upon a frame and suspended by cords from the beam, which forms the circle. Every night the door is barricaded with a long piece of timber supported by two stout posts down in the ground, inside of the hut, one on each side of the door. As you enter the hut after passing through the porch and door, the first thing that strikes the view is a kind of triangular apartment on the left hand side of the door, and fronting the fire. This is for the purpose of fire-wood in the winter. This partition is constructed of square planks, about twelve feet high, and caulked to keep off the air from the door. Between the partition and the fire, there is commonly a distance of about five feet, which the master of the hut occupies during the day time, seated on a mat, constructed of small willows. * * * These mats are about ten feet long and four broad. The two ends for about two and a half feet are raised from the ground in a slanting position and each supported by a kind of sofa; over the mat is spread buffalo skins.

352 571 Some of these couches are raised about a foot above the ground. Seated upon this a Mandan sits all day long and receives his friends, smokes and chats the time away, with the greatest dignity. He sometimes passes the night there also, when not inclined to lay with his wives.

INSIDE ARRANGEMENT OF HUTS.

352 513 On the left side of the host begins their range of beds. The master and his favorite wife always occupy the first, and his other wives each a separate one in succession, next to those of the young people. All are constructed in the same manner, and joining to each other lengthways.

MEDICINE STAGE,

353 At the bottom of the hut fronting the Masters' seat, stands his medicine stage, and indeed it may be called his whole riches

[See Category 116, p. 331-VD. -A.]

10: Neill H-4(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

and treasures, as it contains every thing he values most, viz: two bulls' heads, which seem to be their great Manitou and protection. They are well daubed over with earth, and particular care is taken of them. There is laid on, or rather hung up, his arms, shield, ammunition, scalps of his enemies, and every thing he most values.

MORTAR AND PESTLE.

Next to this stage, stand the mortar and pestle, fixed firm in the ground, and the remainder of the hut from that to the door is vacant during the daytime, but occupied during the night by the horses. Then there still remains a large space in the center, around the fire, for the use of the family, which is generally swept clean once a day.

CORN STAGE.

Fronting the entrance of each porch stands a stage raised about eight feet from the ground, twenty feet in length, and ten feet in breadth, for the purpose of hanging up their corn to dry, in the fall; these stages have a tolerable good flooring, which in the fall is covered with beans to dry, and posts are erected upon them, on the tops of which are laid poles or rafters, to which the corn and sliced squashes are suspended in tresses to dry. When their harvest is over, they must have a pretty effect, but at this season of the year they are lumbered up with different kinds of drift-wood, of which they make their fires, and it gives a very ugly appearance to the villages.

DRIFT WOOD.

This wood they collect, in the spring, when the ice breaks up, and when great quantities of this wood floats down, the natives being expert swimmers, and so very active, that there is scarcely a large tree escapes them, until they have a sufficient stock for the year. I observed lying opposite to each village, an immense pile of this wood, and some trees of an amazing size. Commonly, when they collect the drift wood there come down numbers of drowned buffalo, that have perished in attempting to cross above, at a season when the ice was bad. These animals the natives are very careful to haul on shore, as they prefer the flesh in that state.

LIGHT HAIRED CHILDREN.

An extraordinory sight that struck me among these people, was to see several children, of about ten years of age, whose hair was perfectly gray, and bore a strong resemblance to aged persons. Those I saw were all girls. These people in general have not that strong coarse hair, so peculiar to the natives of North America; it is of a much finer nature, rather inclining to

[See Category 16, p. 340.-N.]